



The United States Environmental Protection Agency's
Asian American & Pacific Islander

Outreach Strategy





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Introduction

[Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders] are a people in constant motion, a great work in progress, each stage more faceted and complex than before. As we overcome adversity and take on new challenges, we have evolved as a people. Our special dynamism is our gift to America. As we transform ourselves, so we are transforming America.

—Helen Zia, Author

Asian American Dreams: The Emergence of an American People

Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPIs) represent a vast array of cultures. The term “Asian Americans” refers to Americans with origins from one or more of the 28 Asian nations, while the term “Pacific Islanders” refers to Native Hawaiians and other natives living in the U.S. protectorates of Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas, or Americans with origins from one or more of the 19 Pacific Island Nations (see box on page 3).

A Strategy for Reaching Out

EPA developed the National Asian American and Pacific Islander Outreach Strategy to create a comprehensive framework for strengthening the Agency’s relationship with the nation’s diverse and growing AAPI community. The strategy outlines approaches for managers to expand outreach efforts both within and outside the Agency, and for increasing dialogue with the AAPI community.

The strategy rests on four pillars: 1) Community Partnerships; 2) Economic Opportunities; 3) Education Pipeline; and 4) Employment and Professional Advancement. Together, these pillars provide a strong foundation for ensuring that EPA:

- Responds effectively to the environmental and public health needs of AAPIs, and encourages public participation and informed decision-making.
- Provides economic opportunities for AAPI businesses.
- Encourages AAPI youth to be stewards of the environment and to consider the pursuit of environmental careers.
- Enhances diversity and professional opportunity within the Agency’s workplace.

Listening to the Community

EPA engaged in a cooperative process to develop and shape this strategy. During the spring and summer of 2000, senior Agency officials met with AAPI residents, community groups, academia, businesses, and state and local governments in five U.S. communities with diverse AAPI populations. The purpose of these listening sessions was to gather community input on the strategy and to raise awareness about the environment in which these people live.

The first listening session took place on May 10, 2000, in Seattle, Washington. Co-sponsored by the National Asian Pacific Center on Aging (NAPCA), the informal meeting gave attendees an opportunity to speak to high-level EPA officials and to share their ideas for reaching out to AAPI communities, both in the Seattle area and nationally. Attendees brought up a broad range of issues, from environmental to socioeconomic, for EPA to consider in crafting the strategy.

Subsequent meetings were held in Oakland, Jersey City, Houston, and Chicago. These meetings were designed to provide attendees with information about EPA's work and mission at the national and regional levels, and to encourage attendees to ask questions about environmental and health concerns in their neighborhoods.

The voices and visions of these sessions helped EPA shape the outreach strategy to reflect environmental and health issues which are high priorities for AAPI communities. The strategy is a document that will evolve and adapt to AAPIs' changing needs, issues, and concerns.



Tracing AAPI Roots

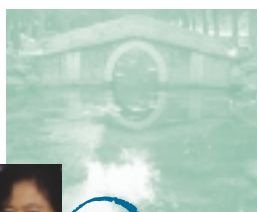
Asian

Asian Indian	Korean
Bangladeshi	Laotian
Burmese	Malayan
Cambodian	Okinawan
Chinese	Pakistani
Filipino	Sri Lankan
Hmong	Thai
Indonesian	Vietnamese
Japanese	All other Asian

Native Hawai'ian or Other Pacific Islander

Chamorro	Palauan
Fijian	Samoan
Guamanian	Tahitian
Hawai'ian	Tongan
Marshallese	All other Pacific
Micronesia	Islander
Northern Mariana	
Islander	





Outreach Strategy

For articles featuring EPA's efforts to build partnerships and raise environmental awareness within AAPI communities, see page 10.

Community Partnerships

Goal

Build effective partnerships with AAPI organizations and communities to raise their environmental awareness and to increase EPA's responsiveness to their environmental and public health priorities.

Implementation Guidance:

1 Enhance awareness of environmental and public health issues through community outreach and dialogue to help families and communities make informed decisions concerning environmental exposures that may cause illnesses in themselves and their children.

- Increase dialogue with AAPI communities to identify environmental and health-related outreach needs, and develop strategies to address these needs.
- Educate AAPI communities on the meaning and importance of environmental justice.
- Improve communication of cleanup activities in all areas affected by hazardous waste sites.
- Educate AAPI communities in a culturally sensitive manner regarding possible health risks due to their lifestyle, occupation, dietary consumption patterns, and other practices.
- Develop an EPA compliance assistance outreach program to increase AAPI community and business awareness and understanding of EPA regulations.
- Coordinate with other federal agencies to exchange and disseminate appropriate health information to AAPI communities.
- Formulate strategies with AAPI communities to overcome linguistic and cultural barriers to optimize the dissemination of information and building of partnerships within predominately immigrant populations.

2 Develop a partnership with AAPI communities to remove obstacles to the revitalization of brownfield sites and properties.

- Investigate the degree and extent of site contamination (i.e., conduct an assessment) to facilitate brownfields cleanup and encourage the mitigation of potential health risks.



- Encourage community organizations, business developers, and local governments to form a partnership to revitalize existing properties that can directly benefit local AAPI communities.

3 Identify and promote research opportunities to collect data on environmentally induced health disparities in AAPI communities.

- Coordinate and learn from other communities facing environmental justice and health-related issues prevalent in their local area and the best means to address them.
- Identify existing grant mechanisms and encourage community-based organizations and businesses to apply for grant funding to conduct AAPI-related health research projects.

4 Encourage AAPIs to participate in Federal Advisory Committees such as NEJAC (National Environmental Justice Advisory Committee) involved in the Agency's environmental decision-making process.

- Develop an AAPI Resource Directory of professional, environmental/health, community, business, and other organizations and make it available to the designated federal officials in charge of selecting members for Federal Advisory Committees.
- Actively recruit and recommend candidates to serve on EPA Federal Advisory Committees.
- Establish networks with AAPI professional organizations and other community-based organizations to encourage technically competent individuals to become committee members.

5 Effectively promote EPA program objectives and accomplishments, and maintain continuous dialogue with the AAPI community.

- Develop a National AAPI Outreach Strategy publication for distribution to communities, including strategies for community partnerships.
- Develop and manage an AAPI Web site to serve as an information portal for AAPIs and as an outlet for continuous feedback on EPA's AAPI strategies and activities.

6 Develop ways to improve access to environmental programs and information by individuals with limited English proficiency.

- Develop a Translation Protocol (guidance document) for translating general outreach materials into foreign languages, including select AAPI languages.
- Develop alternative communication strategies for disseminating information (i.e., non-written forms like symbols, pictures, audio/video, etc.).
- Encourage communication with other environmental justice communities regarding public participation and access to information activities.
- Provide Title VI (of the Civil Rights Act of 1964) guidance to all federal funding recipients.
- Utilize the Translation and Interpretative Service contract available through GSA to better communicate environmental and health issues to individuals with limited English proficiency.

Economic Opportunities

Goal

Broaden access to EPA financial and technical assistance for community groups and other non-governmental organizations serving AAPI communities.

Implementation Guidance:

1 Increase AAPI awareness of and access to Agencywide grant and contracting opportunities.

- Develop outreach materials for AAPI businesses, community groups, and other organizations serving AAPI communities to boost awareness of grant and contracting opportunities.
- Hold a forum for AAPI businesses and other organizations to raise their awareness of contracting opportunities (e.g., AAPI Business Counseling Day).
- Widely announce the availability of training/workshops on how to write grant proposals or how to bid for government contracts and encourage the use of grant-writing tutorials as part of the Grant Compliance Initiative.
- Sponsor AAPI business conferences.
- Develop tracking systems that monitor financial resources going to AAPI concerns, and identify any barriers to awarding contracts and grants.
- Develop and maintain a comprehensive list of community groups and other non-governmental organizations serving the AAPI community to provide outreach on future procurement opportunities with EPA.



For articles detailing EPA's financial assistance programs and other efforts to aid small, minority businesses, see page 24.

See also chart of EPA grants programs, pages 40-41.



Education Pipeline

Goal

Identify additional resources for institutions and programs serving AAPI students at all educational levels.

Implementation Guidance:

1 Promote and manage grant fellowship and scholarship programs to ensure equal access to and fairness in the awarding of research funds.

- Help students become aware of these programs, and encourage them to apply for grant funding.
- Evaluate the peer review process for proposals to ensure fairness in award selection.
- Provide guidance to recipients of federal financial assistance who administer education programs or activities and promote consistent and adequate enforcement of Title IX (of the Civil Rights Act of 1964) by the federal agencies.

2 Adopt a local school in a diverse, urban area with a significant AAPI student population.

- Develop a 2-year strategic work plan to promote school participation in science-based activities.
- Encourage EPA regional staff to participate in developing environmental science curricula.



For articles highlighting EPA's endeavors to reach out to AAPI youth through partnerships with educational institutions, see page 28.

Employment and Professional Advancement

Goal

Demonstrate that EPA is an employer of choice that is committed to fair and equal employment opportunity.

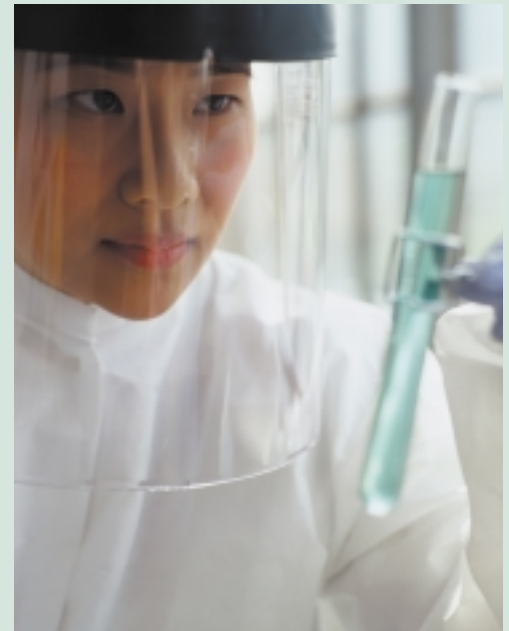
Implementation Guidance:

1 Develop effective outreach strategies to ensure current and future AAPI professionals will consider public service as a viable employment option.

- Develop a program with local schools that puts students in contact with positive role models working in the environmental field.
- Work with local schools to develop environmental curricula or environmental education study materials.
- Establish contacts with AAPI professional organizations and sponsor conferences.

2 Work with EPA's Office of Human Resources and Organizational Services to ensure an effective Agency presence at a wide variety of recruitment opportunities, including AAPI conferences and events

- Coordinate local recruitment efforts with EPA's national program and other Agency offices.
- Promote the understanding and better utilization of all available federal hiring authorities to recruit AAPI individuals for the EPA Intern Program, Presidential Management Intern Program, and other Agency vacancies.
- Attend and actively participate in recruitment events, even when EPA is not in a hiring mode.



3 Emphasize the recruitment of AAPI applicants for EPA's summer intern program and similar entry-level trainee positions.

- Establish a network of contacts at various colleges, universities, and local AAPI organizations to disseminate information on environmental career opportunities and recruit prospective AAPI employees.
- Encourage collaboration between colleges and universities serving AAPI students similar to the currently established EPA network of contacts with the Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU), and the Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs).
- Optimize the use of Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with educational institutions and AAPI-serving organizations.

4 Remove barriers to AAPI employee participation in professional development and training programs.

- Widely disseminate the criteria for hiring, promotions, awards, career development activities, and training.
- Review organizational Diversity Action Plans to ensure equal access to developmental opportunities, including supervisory and managerial positions and special assignments.

5 Adopt policies and procedures to make EPA managers and supervisors accountable for upholding equal employment opportunity and fairness guidelines.

- Consider AAPI underrepresentation when developing innovative approaches to implement the senior executive service accountability model.
- Evaluate manager and supervisor performance in using tools authorized by the Affirmative Employment Program Plan and Diversity Action Plans.

For articles outlining EPA's efforts to attract AAPI professionals to its workforce, see page 34.



Community Partnerships

When building community relationships, it's important to remember that there is no typical Asian American or Pacific Islander. AAPIs come from culturally and geographically diverse origins and speak different languages and dialects. Many of these individuals also come as refugees from war-torn countries where there is an inherent distrust of government.

Reaching out to this vast and disparate population means that EPA must first and foremost listen to and address the specific issues facing individual AAPI communities—ranging from brownfields redevelopment to the consumption of contaminated seafood. The Agency also must use culturally appropriate media channels and translate educational materials into AAPI languages.

EPA has demonstrated its commitment to community partnerships by supporting the first-ever seafood consumption study focusing on AAPIs in King County, Washington. The Agency is also working with AAPI communities to ensure environmental justice, to protect workers, and to improve children's health—especially those living in urban areas—through education and training on issues such as indoor air, lead, and pesticides.

The following articles illustrate some of the ways EPA is working with AAPI communities to build effective partnerships.

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Seafood Consumption in the Pacific Northwest

Seafood offers a host of nutritional benefits, from low fat to high protein. Many AAPI groups consider the collection and consumption of seafood a healthy activity that reflects a traditional way of life. Harvesting seafood is also an economic necessity for many AAPIs. But there are potential concerns associated with eating seafood. Contaminants that enter the water (through industrial discharges and other means) can collect in the tissues of fish and shellfish, posing health risks to the people who eat them. AAPIs are particularly at risk because seafood is a large part of their diet.

In the 1990s, EPA funded a study to examine seafood consumption patterns among AAPI groups in King County, Washington. The study was significant in several ways. First, very few seafood consumption studies have been done for ethnic groups, and the information collected through this effort provides new insights into the consumption patterns and food preparation practices among AAPIs. In addition, the study was culturally balanced and examined the practices of many different ethnic groups, reflecting the great diversity of AAPI populations. Perhaps most important, the study was designed by the community for the community, so it truly engaged and involved the people most affected by the results.

Getting Started

In 1994, it became common knowledge that AAPIs in King County were being exposed to contaminants at hazardous waste sites in the area. People were seen collecting seaweed from the beaches and harvesting seafood from the Puget Sound.

Dr. Roseanne Lorenzana, a toxicologist at EPA's Region 10 office, decided to go to the area and talk firsthand to the AAPI community. Dr. Lorenzana described her attempts at communicating with the people she encountered as "two magnets opposing each other." The more she tried, the further they stepped back.

Dr. Lorenzana realized that she needed a different approach if she wanted to build trust and communicate effectively with the AAPI community. First, she hired an intern who knew leaders in both the Japanese and Filipino communities. Next, she enlisted the aid of the Refugee Federation Service Center (RFSC), the largest social aid organization for recent immigrants and refugees in King County. The agency's bilingual/bicultural staff and volunteers speak a variety of Asian languages and maintain affiliations with several AAPI community groups.

EPA awarded two grants to the RFSC to assess the seafood consumption patterns of 10 ethnic groups in King County: Cambodian, Chinese, Filipino, Hmong, Japanese, Korean, Laotian,



I thought it was important for the community to design the study to the extent possible.

—Dr. Roseanne Lorenzana
EPA Region 10

Mien, Samoan, and Vietnamese. The study also would examine seafood preparation and cooking methods and develop culturally appropriate health messages. To ensure the messages effectively reached the community, the study also would determine how AAPIs prefer to receive information.

Committee Involvement

To interest and involve AAPI leaders in the study, RFSC set up three committees. The 15 members of the Community Steering Committee each belonged to at least one of the ethnic groups being surveyed and was affiliated with one or more community organizations. Having community contacts was important for facilitating the networking and outreach efforts of the study's staff. This committee also oversaw every facet of the study and provided recommendations on specific cultural issues, such as how to approach the community.

According to Dr. Lorenzana, "I learned that you couldn't just call up a person, or go to someone's home and hand them a survey to fill out." There are culturally appropriate ways to visit a home and greet people to set the stage for appropriate communication, she noted.

The Community Steering Committee also would ensure that a culturally acceptable survey instrument was developed. "I thought it was important for the community to design the study to the extent possible," Dr. Lorenzana said.

The other two committees provided technical assistance and helped ensure that the study was relevant and applicable to different interested agencies and ethnic groups in King County. A first-generation Chinese American was also brought on board as a statistician. In addition, the University of Washington's community outreach office got involved at this point. "The university saw the study as something new and innovative and wanted to participate," Dr. Lorenzana said.

Study Results

Based on the consumption patterns of 202 respondents, the study found that:

- AAPIs generally consumed seafood at a very high rate, even higher than some Native American tribes in the area who maintain a traditional subsistence harvest from local estuaries and rivers.
- AAPIs of all income and education levels ate about the same amount of seafood, and there was no statistical difference in consumption rates between men and women.



- Members of the Vietnamese and Japanese communities consumed the most seafood, while Mien, Hmong, and Samoan community members consumed the least amount of seafood.
- Shellfish was eaten most often and in the highest amount. More than half of the AAPIs surveyed ate fish skin and crab butter. This information was useful because toxins can concentrate in higher levels in different parts of fish and shellfish.
- First-generation AAPIs and people older than 55 years old consumed the most seafood in nearly all categories. Nonetheless, second-generation AAPIs still consumed more seafood than the “average” American.

The amount of seafood harvested locally was relatively small, varying from 3 percent to 21 percent, depending on the seafood type. Dr. Lorenzana was somewhat surprised that more people were not harvesting seafood from local waters, although the study indicated that individual small groups did fish extensively from Puget Sound. She noted that because the study was designed to sample so many groups, the insight into the behavior of any one ethnicity was limited.

Based on the study’s results, a brochure was developed, translated into the 10 languages, and tested with focus groups. The publication describes risks from eating bad seafood, types of contaminants found in seafood, and populations most at risk, such as the elderly and children. It also offers suggestions to reduce potential risks, including understanding which types of seafood are most likely to cause problems, knowing where the seafood comes from, and using safe preparation and cooking practices.

Next Steps

The work is not over. The logical next step is to test for contaminant types and amounts in the different seafood species being consumed by AAPI groups in King County. Ultimately, Dr. Lorenzana hopes EPA can conduct a risk assessment that would clarify the risks to these communities. But this study was a meaningful first step toward engaging the community in an important local health issue and raising awareness of seafood safety.

Getting the Word Out

The study found that the preferred learning methods among the respondents were:

1. Books and pamphlets (69 percent)
2. Verbal communication (55 percent)
3. Videos (35 percent)

The preferred information sources were:

1. AAPI community newspapers/ newsletters (75 percent)
2. Television (65 percent)
3. Word of mouth (60 percent)



Mercury Action Plan

Recent studies have shown an increase in U.S. fish consumption, particularly among AAPIs. According to EPA's 1997 Mercury Report to Congress, AAPIs "consume fish more often than do other population members." This is a concern for EPA because once mercury is released into the environment, it can reach a body of water and contaminate fish at a level that is hazardous to humans.

In response to the high levels of mercury that are being produced, EPA is drafting the Mercury Action Plan. The plan's purpose is to address voluntary and regulatory actions that the Agency is taking to reduce mercury releases into the environment, as well as help coordinate EPA mercury-related activities. In addition, the plan identifies industry sectors that the Agency and other interested stakeholders, such as the AAPI community, can work with to reduce or eliminate mercury in manufacturing processes and products.

Solid waste incineration and fossil fuel combustion contribute about 87 percent of the mercury emissions in the United States. Mercury can also be released into the environment through a variety of other ways, including mining and smelting activities, and wastewater treatment facilities, which may release mercury directly into water bodies.

EPA regulates air emissions from the leading major mercury sources, including coal-fired electric utilities and municipal, medical, and hazardous waste incinerators.

Educating the public about mercury exposure is critical, particularly for groups such as AAPIs, who ingest fish as a significant part of their diet. EPA has published several documents that include *Should I Eat the Fish I Catch*, which was translated into Hmong and Vietnamese, and the *Seafood Consumption Study*, which was translated into Cambodian, Filipino, Laotian, Samoan, Korean, and Vietnamese. Such materials are vital for communicating to AAPI communities the potential health hazards of mercury.



Environmental Justice for Philadelphia's Chinatown

Redevelopment of blighted areas can provide obvious benefits to a community, particularly when those areas include brownfields. In some cases, however, redevelopment efforts can adversely impact a community, especially in areas comprised of low-income populations or people of color. In Philadelphia's Chinatown district, a baseball stadium development project proposed by the city became a concern for the AAPI community, which believed the stadium would hinder retail growth, intensify traffic and air pollution, and contribute to parking congestion.

The Philadelphia Chinatown Development Corporation (PCDC) rallied local forces and outside support to persuade the city to reconsider its proposal. The PCDC approached EPA's Region 3 office to tap the Agency's support in opposing the construction of a stadium at 12th and Vine Streets.

Primarily, the proposed stadium would have "continued the stunting of Chinatown," said Andrew Toy, a 10-year board member for the PCDC, during a City Council hearing in 2000. Chinatown is almost completely surrounded by development, including the Vine Street Expressway, Independence Mall, and the Convention Center. The stadium's location would have dashed any hopes for expanding Chinatown northward.

According to the PCDC, Chinatown has lost 25 percent of its housing and businesses due to urban renewal projects. Even so, Chinatown's population has quadrupled during the past decade, said John Chin, the PCDC's executive director. The population surge has caused many residents to live in substandard housing and overcrowded conditions, which leaves little choice but for Chinatown to expand, Chin said. "The stadium would have pinned us in from all sides," he added.

We've worked hard with the state DEP to build a strong awareness of environmental justice issues—and I think we've been successful.

—Samantha Fairchild
Director of the Office of Enforcement,
Compliance, and Environmental Justice
EPA Region 3

Ensuring Environmental Justice

Over the last decade, Americans have become increasingly aware that minority populations and/or low-income populations bear a disproportionate amount of adverse health and environmental effects. EPA established an Environmental Justice program to ensure that communities comprised mainly of people of color or low-income populations receive equal protection under environmental laws.

To aid the community in its effort, EPA toured the site and provided the PCDC with a geographic information system (GIS) map, which detailed census and environmental data about the site. Such information helped the PCDC clearly identify what was at stake if a baseball stadium was built.

EPA also worked to involve the Pennsylvania State Department of Environmental Protection



(DEP). EPA toured the site again with the DEP, and even took DEP officials to a local Chinatown restaurant to further discuss the environmental justice issues of the proposed stadium, such as traffic and air pollution.

“We’ve worked hard with the state DEP to build a strong awareness of environmental justice issues—and I think we’ve been successful,” said Samantha Fairchild, Director of the Office of Enforcement, Compliance, and Environmental Justice for EPA Region 3.

The city’s mayor eventually rescinded the proposal, citing financial factors, not environmental justice. However, because of the efforts of EPA and the PCDC, environmental justice issues faced by communities such as Chinatown gained significant attention by local and state authorities. In addition, this scenario helped demonstrate the power of public participation in achieving environmental equity.



Source: PCDC

Ignatius Wang, a board member of the PCDC, addresses attendees at a Stadium Out of Chinatown meeting. To Wang’s immediate left is PCDC executive director John Chin; at left are councilman Frank DiCicco and Cecila Yep.

What Is a Brownfield?

A brownfield is an abandoned, idled, or underused industrial and commercial facility at which expansion or redevelopment is complicated by real or perceived environmental contamination. Examples of brownfields include abandoned factories, lots, gas stations, and warehouses.

Lowell, Massachusetts, where the AAPI community makes up a significant portion of the population, has targeted 17 brownfield sites for redevelopment. Lowell’s redevelopment efforts have leveraged more than \$100 million in funding.

Seattle and King County, Washington, which also have a significant AAPI population, are looking for ways to clean up and redevelop the 8,500-acre Duwamish industrial corridor, with more than 200 contaminated properties.



Giving AAPI Communities a Voice

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 48 percent of AAPIs have lived in this country for 20 years or less, and certain groups—such as Vietnamese, Cambodians, Laotians, Hmong, Samoans, and Tongans—have immigrated to the United States mainly within the past 30 years. These newer immigrants face greater environmental hazards as a result of high unemployment, low education levels, and language barriers.

The Asian Pacific Environmental Network (APEN) is working to organize community leaders and to build grassroots organizations in these and other AAPI communities. These groups or leaders can then act as partners with APEN and collaborate with other organizations working on environmental justice issues. “Environmental justice” is the term used to describe efforts made toward addressing the disproportionate environmental hazards that minority and low-income communities often face.

APEN has worked closely with EPA in recent years to augment AAPIs’ voice on environmental issues. The group helped the National Environmental Justice Advisory Council (NEJAC) develop a document that outlined a model for public participation, which was distributed to government agencies at all levels. (NEJAC is a Federal Advisory Committee established in 1993 to provide independent consultation and recommendations to the Administrator of EPA on matters related to environmental justice.) APEN also mobilized AAPIs to participate in public forums

regarding issues affecting their communities and facilitated a meeting in 1998 in Oakland for NEJAC to hear firsthand the issues faced by a local Southeast Asian community.

To date, most of APEN’s work has centered on San Francisco, where the organization is based, and the Bay Area. For example, APEN launched the Laotian Organizing Project (LOP), which aims to build a democratic infrastructure within the

For AAPI communities, environmental justice is about improving our overall quality of life. To do this, we need to develop mechanisms to promote meaningful community participation.

—Joselito Laudencia, executive director of the Asian Pacific Environmental Network



Source: APEN



Laotian community in the Richmond area of West Contra Costa County to help it resolve environmental justice issues. The LOP effort has led to a number of improvements, including the formation of a teacher advisory program at Richmond High School, where students faced a lack of counseling resources. In the pilot program, at least one adult provides guidance to each student. In addition, the LOP persuaded Contra Costa County to implement a multilingual emergency phone alert system to boost awareness of environmental and health hazards among non-English-speaking community members.

APEN is also working to build networks beyond the Bay Area and California. APEN's ultimate goal is to create a national network through which AAPIs and other minority communities can voice their concerns and effectively enhance their quality of life.

Toward that end, APEN collaborated with five other environmental justice networks to create the Environmental Justice Fund, which provides a forum for environmental justice groups to develop resources. The fund is also designed to distribute resources equitably to environmental justice groups.

Source: APEN



APEN's Laotian Organizing Project has successfully mobilized the community to participate in a variety of environmental issues.



Reaching Out to Korean Dry Cleaners

Approximately 30 percent of dry cleaning businesses in the United States are owned by first-generation Koreans. Because of the potential health and environmental concerns associated with perchloroethylene, or “perc,” a chemical solvent used by most dry cleaners and a suspected carcinogen, EPA and stakeholders from the dry cleaning industry and public interest groups have been working together to evaluate new technologies, process controls, and chemical substitutions.

To reach these key stakeholders, EPA’s Design for the Environment’s Garment and Textile Care Program (GTCP) translated several educational and informational publications into Korean. GTCP has also been working with the Federation of Korean Dry Cleaners Associations and the International Fabricare Institute to inform Korean business owners about alternative technologies that can improve their operations and profit while contributing to a cleaner environment and safer workplace.



Peer Training in Oakland

In 1999, the Korean Community Center of the East Bay in Oakland, California, received an EPA grant to fund the Peer Leadership Program, which enlisted and trained peer leaders to provide community-based outreach to Korean American dry cleaners, who constitute nearly 60 percent of all dry cleaner owners and operators in California.

Peer leaders shared information on the potential health risks associated with the use of perchloroethylene. They also discussed alternative technologies such as wet cleaning, which uses controlled applications of soap and water and washer speeds to clean clothes without solvents. The peer leaders also facilitated voluntary compliance with both federal and local environmental regulations and conducted comprehensive facility inspections covering air quality, chemicals, pollution prevention, and record-keeping.

Under the EPA grant, the program trained 15 peer leaders and evaluated 60 dry cleaners in the Bay Area.



Protecting Generations

In recent years, EPA has worked to improve its understanding of how environmental hazards pose risks to sensitive populations, particularly children. AAPI youth, like other children in America, face a wide array of hazards, including:

- Lead poisoning from lead-based paint and dust found in older buildings, soil, water pipes, and other sources.
- Direct and indirect exposures to pesticides used in homes, schools, farms, and elsewhere, as well as to pesticide residues on certain foods.
- Exposures to indoor and outdoor air pollutants, including secondhand smoke, that can result in respiratory illnesses and asthma.
- Exposures to mercury, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), and other chemical and microbial contaminants from swimming in polluted surface waters, drinking contaminated water, and eating certain fish and shellfish.
- Exposure to toxic waste from abandoned industrial sites located near communities.
- Overexposure to the sun's harmful ultraviolet rays, which can cause skin cancer, cataracts, and other medical problems in adulthood.



EPA is working with schools, parents, communities, medical professionals, and other groups to educate AAPIs about environmental threats to children and preventive actions. The Agency also is encouraging community-right-to-know efforts and public participation through a variety of grants and EPA regional projects.

Educating Families About Lead Poisoning

Lead poisoning crosses all socioeconomic, geographic, and racial boundaries, but the burden falls disproportionately on low-income and minority families. In the mid-1990s, EPA provided funding to launch an ongoing lead education program in ethnic communities in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. The program has been successful in raising awareness of lead poisoning among the city's Southeast Asian—primarily Hmong and Laotian—and Hispanic communities and in identifying homes with high lead levels.

The program's goal was to reach out to families served by the Sixteenth Street Community Health Center and teach them about lead hazards in the home to prevent their children from





Peeling, chipping, and cracking lead-based paints are hazardous to children.

being lead-poisoned. Many children in these families had elevated levels of lead in their blood but were not being routinely tested.

Bilingual workers living in the community went door-to-door, talking with parents about potential lead hazards in their homes and ways to protect their children. The workers conducted “finger-stick” blood lead tests on residents. When lead was detected in the home, workers provided additional information on managing and abating the problem. Educational materials were translated into Hmong, and further outreach was conducted via community groups and festivals.

As a result of the project, the AAPI community in Milwaukee is more aware of lead hazards and how to protect their children from lead poisoning. In fact, lead poisoning of children identified through the study has dropped by 60 percent.

Taking Actions to Reduce “Chinese Chalk” Use

“Chinese Chalk” is an illegal and dangerous pesticide that is often marketed to AAPIs. Applied on floors and baseboards to control crawling insects, the chalk contains chemicals that can cause health effects and allergic reactions. This product is imported from China, but because it is unregistered in the United States, its ingredients and packaging are unregulated.

Chinese Chalk is particularly hazardous to children. Once removed from the package, this pesticide product is easily confused with blackboard chalk. The colorful boxes used to package these products also have been found to contain high levels of lead and other heavy metals, which can be a problem because of children’s hand-to-mouth behavior. In addition, because Chinese Chalk is powder-based, its poisonous properties can become airborne.

EPA Regions 5 and 9 have issued warnings to alert AAPIs of the dangers of this product and to recommend safer alternatives to manage pests. The Agency is also taking enforcement actions to stop the product’s distribution. In 1998, EPA ordered one of the chalk’s distributors to stop selling the product; the company had actively marketed the product to schools and consumers on the Internet and in newspaper advertisements. This is a significant accomplishment given that it is difficult to stop the sale of the products, which are typically marketed at flea markets, swap meets, and small retail venues.



Chinese chalk is an illegal and dangerous pesticide.



Raising Awareness of Indoor Air Pollutants

It's no mystery that childhood asthma is on the rise. Asthma is the most prevalent chronic illness in our nation's children. Each year, nearly 300 children die from this condition, and approximately 150,000 children are hospitalized. The problem affects American youth of all races and ethnic groups, but it is most severe among low-income, inner-city, and minority children.

Many pollutants can cause or contribute to asthma, but some of the most common triggers are indoor air pollutants such as dust and molds. In 1999, the Association of Asian Pacific Community Health Organizations (AAPCHO) received an EPA grant to help raise awareness of asthma and indoor air quality issues in AAPI communities. AAPCHO is an association of 14 community health centers around the country.

The organization translated several EPA educational brochures on asthma triggers, radon, and car-

bon monoxide into Chinese, Vietnamese, and Korean and distributed them through their member centers in Washington, Massachusetts, New York, California, and Hawai'i. AAPCHO also sent the documents to organizations that requested them.

According to Jeff Caballero, Executive Director of AAPCHO, the materials have been well received by the AAPI communities, particularly in Worcester, Massachusetts, Boston, and Seattle, and have been instrumental in detecting several cases of asthma and radon.

The association also examined AAPIs' knowledge and attitudes toward indoor air quality issues in several cities and provided training to health care workers serving AAPI communities.

Through these projects, AAPCHO is providing resources and skills to community-based organizations that serve AAPIs and is helping these organizations collaborate with local partners working on indoor air issues. The projects also are empowering individuals to make changes in their homes to reduce the prevalence of asthma among AAPI children and upgrade the quality of life of families.

AAPCHO is very proud of the work we've done with these projects, for we were able to further raise awareness about indoor air issues within AAPI communities that were not adequately being reached.

—Jeff Caballero,
Executive Director of AAPCHO





Protecting Workers From Pesticide Hazards

EPA's Worker Protection Standard (WPS) seeks to protect the more than 3.5 million U.S. agricultural workers and pesticide handlers who work with these potentially hazardous chemicals. The standard requires employers to provide personal protective equipment, safety training, and access to emergency assistance. They also must adhere to a number of other guidelines.

In order to reach AAPI populations that would be affected by the standard, EPA has translated an informational pamphlet on the WPS into eight languages, including Laotian, Thai, Vietnamese, Tagalog, and Mandarin Chinese. EPA is also working with state extension agents and state agricultural agencies to reach small farm groups who may be unaware of the dangers of pesticides.

EPA also is assessing its efforts in reaching out to AAPIs and other non-English-speaking workers to determine if the program is meeting its goals and to break down remaining language and cultural barriers.



Economic Opportunities

EPA is committed to assist small, minority-owned businesses through grants, contracts, and other means of economical support. Unfortunately, many AAPI organizations and AAPI-owned businesses are unaware of such opportunities or don't fully understand how to take advantage of these economic benefits.

To improve access to and awareness of its financial assistance programs, EPA must continue to build bridges with AAPI community groups and organizations and strengthen collaborative procurement planning within the Agency.

EPA is reaching out to AAPI-owned businesses through partnerships with trade associations and through public workshops. Additionally, EPA plans to track its resource allocations to minority businesses, allowing the Agency to focus future outreach efforts where minorities such as AAPIs are underrepresented. Through these and other efforts—such as an AAPI Business Counseling Day and other conferences—EPA will continue to provide economic support and education to AAPI-owned businesses.

The following articles illuminate how EPA is working to ensure that AAPIs have equal access to economical and business opportunities. For more information, see the Summary of U.S. EPA Community Grant Programs on pages 40–41.

Resource Applications, Inc.: Professionalism Helps a Small Firm Win Big	25
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Fund Tracking to Boost Opportunities for Minority-Owned Businesses	27
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Resource Applications, Inc.: Professionalism Helps a Small Firm Win Big

Resource Applications, Inc., (RAI) is a small, Indian-owned environmental consulting firm based in Burke, Virginia, that has been a contractor for EPA for the past 15 years. In 2000, RAI was awarded a \$17 million dollar contract with the Agency, one of the largest contracts EPA has ever awarded to a small business.

Under the contract, RAI will provide emergency response services to support EPA's mid-Atlantic region in the investigation and cleanup of hazardous waste sites and oil spills, primarily in Virginia. The 5-year contract also covers work in Delaware, Maryland, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and the District of Columbia. RAI won the contract in direct competition with other small business firms.

Dr. Tara Singh founded RAI in 1979. Dr. Singh is an environmental engineer with more than 30 years of experience in regulatory compliance, investigations planning, and design and construction oversight. Before starting his own firm, he worked for a number of large organizations, including Bell Atlantic, Lockheed Martin, and the U.S. Department of Defense.

Dr. Singh said he believes his firm has become a successful government contractor primarily because of its talented, dedicated staff and its commitment to excellence. "You have to be a professional organization first," he said. "You have to be committed to the program and the growth of the company to succeed."

You have to be a professional organization first. You have to be committed to the program and the growth of the company to succeed.

—Dr. Tara Singh,
Founder of RAI



Dr. Tara Singh, seated at right, of RAI at the contract award signing ceremony. To date, the contract is the largest that EPA has awarded a small business.

RAI has approximately 75 employees, including engineers, scientists, support personnel, and specialists, in several offices along the East Coast. The firm consults with both private and public sector entities and provides services in comprehensive environmental management, sanitary engineering, transportation infrastructure, construction oversight, and information systems.

By setting aside large funds for small business contracting, EPA ensures that small and minority-owned businesses benefit from contracting opportunities within the Agency. Through this contracting approach, both the Agency and the businesses enjoy substantial awards.



EPA Procurement: Making the Perfect Match

In dialogues with Asian American communities, EPA discovered that many minority-owned businesses are not aware of contracting and grant opportunities with the Agency. In 2000, EPA's Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization (OSDBU) joined the Asian American Suppliers Council (AASC) in an effort to reach out to Asian American businesses and increase its representation in EPA procurement activities.

AASC is a program of the U.S. Pan Asian American Chamber of Commerce. AASC offers a matchmaking service between purchasers and Asian American suppliers, providing a unique national forum for the two groups to develop mutually beneficial business relationships. It also coordinates business partnerships between suppliers to help small companies improve their qualifications to bid on larger contracts. In addition, AASC provides purchasers with marketing services tailored to the Asian American community, such as advertising, direct marketing, translation, and polling.

For More Information

For more information about doing business with EPA, visit <www.epa.gov/oam> or contact EPA's Office of Acquisition Management, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Washington, DC, 20460, Mail Code 3801R.

For more information on OSDBU, visit <www.epa.gov/osdbu> or write to OSDBU, 1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW. (1230A), Washington, DC, 20460; or call 202 564-4100.

The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) provides financial, technical, and management assistance to more than one million small-business owners each year. Local SBA offices are located in each U.S. state, Guam, and Puerto Rico. For more information, write to SBA Headquarters, 409 3rd St., SW., Washington, DC, 20416; call 800 U-ASK-SBA, or visit <www.sbaonline.sba.gov/gc>.

OSDBU is the EPA office designated to stimulate and improve the involvement of small, minority, and women-owned businesses in the overall EPA procurement process. Other OSDBU outreach efforts targeted toward the AAPI community include one-on-one counseling sessions and an Asian American Business Counseling Day.

See also chart of EPA grants programs, pages 40-41.



Fund Tracking to Boost Opportunities for Minority-Owned Businesses

In 2001, EPA started asking new contract awardees to voluntarily identify the specific racial or ethnic category that best describes their business ownership. The data will be treated as confidential business information and will be used only internally for general statistical purposes or to help focus future outreach initiatives to minority-owned businesses unaware of EPA contracting opportunities.

“Working in conjunction with EPA’s Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization, we will evaluate the data and compare it to data from the U.S. Census Bureau to try and determine which minority groups are underrepresented in EPA procurement,” said Leigh Pomponio of EPA. The Agency will collect this information for 2 years, after which the program will be reevaluated. The program is expected to continue for as long as the collected data remains useful to EPA.



Possible outreach initiatives that might result from this effort include nationwide workshops, seminars, and conferences, as well as presentations on how to do business with EPA and how the government contracting process works. Although these initiatives will be tailored to identified target audiences, they will be open to the general public.

JES: Providing Comprehensive Services to EPA

Joyo Environmental Services (JES), an Asian-American, woman-owned environmental consulting firm based in Alexandria, Virginia, has been an EPA contractor since it was founded in 1995. The firm has managed several EPA contracts as part of a mentor/protege subcontracting program with a larger consulting firm in the area.

JES’s work under these contracts has focused on analytical, technical, and management support for EPA’s Superfund and brownfields programs. The company has produced EPA guidance documents, analyzed technological case studies, developed databases, and planned conferences. JES has also provided EPA with comprehensive services in areas such as risk assessment and management, pollution prevention, and health and safety evaluation.

For other small, disadvantaged firms wishing to enter the federal market, JES president Dr. Josephine Huang advises them to be capable in marketing and finance. “Also, remember that there are peaks and valleys in the consulting business,” she said, “You can succeed if you learn to face disappointments with courage.”

Education Pipeline

AAPIs have been termed the “model minority” because of their success, as a group, in attaining high levels of education and career success. But this label is misleading. Many young Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders live below the poverty line and struggle with cultural and language barriers in their schools. Educators are concerned that there is a significantly higher drop-out rate among Pacific Islanders and Southeast Asians.

EPA is committed to working with educational institutions at all levels to reinforce the “education pipeline” and to help elementary, secondary, and postsecondary students become tomorrow’s environmental leaders.

One of EPA’s methods for reaching out to AAPIs is to enhance access to and fairness in the awarding of grants and research funds; another is to work with schools and educational institutions to provide job, internship, and fellowship opportunities. The Agency has “adopted” schools with large AAPI populations to raise awareness of environmental issues and to strengthen science curricula. EPA staff also serve as role models and mentors for these students.

The articles that follow describe some of the ways that EPA is working to extend educational, research, and environmental career opportunities for AAPI youth.

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EPA Helps Reinvent a San Francisco School

EPA is helping Galileo Academy redefine its curriculum and image. Sixty percent of the students at this San Francisco school are from AAPI communities. In the past, the school was plagued by high dropout and low graduation rates, as well as interracial tension. But with the help of organizations such as EPA, students are finding hope and value in education and preparing for careers in the sciences.

In 1995, a community-based grassroots effort led by the nonprofit group, Chinese for Affirmative Action (CAA), transformed Galileo High School into the Galileo Academy of Science & Technology. With the name change came modifications in the curriculum. Students now can choose from five career pathways:

- Biological science
- Environmental science
- Space science/aeronautics
- Computer science/engineering technology
- Creative media technology

Through CAA's Applied Learning and Linkages (ALL) program, EPA partnered with Galileo to help the school strengthen its curriculum. The ALL program identifies volunteers and mentors from the business, labor, and technology communities and higher education groups to provide academic and career-building support.

Enriching Classroom Experience

EPA's activities are designed to supplement and enrich the classroom experience. By involving whole-class case study/interactive sessions, such as environmental role-playing simulation, students gain critical thinking skills

EPA recognizes the need to help train the next generation of environmental professionals and is committed to a diverse workforce that reflects the population of the region.

—Willard Chin
EPA Region 9

EPA Supports WALC in the City

The Galileo Academy of Science & Technology is one of three high schools involved in the Wilderness Arts and Literacy Collaboration (WALC), a consortium of academic programs in the San Francisco Unified School District. In 2000, WALC received an EPA environmental education grant to help expand the program's inspiring work.

WALC introduces disadvantaged, inner-city students to environmental issues through hands-on lessons, field trips, and camping expeditions. The program encourages students to examine environmental issues in their communities, help raise awareness of these issues, and take actions to address them. WALC integrates science, English, social studies, art, and technology.

EPA's Office of Environmental Education supports environmental education projects that enhance the public's awareness, knowledge, and skills to make informed decisions that affect environmental quality. See pages 40 to 41 for more information.

Reaching Out to Students in Kansas

For the past four years, EPA Region 7 office's Asian Pacific American Special Emphasis Program has worked to improve environmental knowledge among AAPI communities. The Kansas City, Kansas, area has attracted a growing AAPI population, thus EPA has participated in a number of area outreach activities focusing on young AAPIs.

For example, EPA is a partner in the Community Garden Project, run by the local group YouthFriends. Taking place at four Kansas City, Kansas, elementary schools, the program teaches fundamental ecological and environmental concepts through hands-on activities. Students plant and harvest their own gardens, and EPA volunteers train the students on topics such as native plants and composting. EPA is also working to establish a relationship with the Garden City Community College—where most area AAPI college-age students enroll—to recruit co-op students and interns.

surrounding environmental issues. Hands-on projects are also arranged in cooperation with community-based organizations.

EPA organizes student field trips to relevant sites, such as facilities, community organizations, and the Regional EPA office, and introduces the students to methods and technology such as geographic information systems. According to EPA's Willard Chin, the Agency hopes this partnership will encourage students to be aware of the environmental problems around them and to pursue careers in the environmental field.

Providing Role Models

In addition to providing academic support, the partnership provides students with role models who are from their cultural or ethnic heritage. "EPA recognizes the need to help train the next generation of environmental professionals and is committed to a diverse workforce that reflects the population of the region," Chin said. With the help of EPA and employee groups such as the Asian Pacific American Council, role models representing the diversity of the student population are available.

The overall result of EPA's involvement in the program is an opportunity for students to interact with professionals who share their aca-

demic and career interests as well as their cultural background. According to Chin, "Since its transformation into an academy, Galileo is motivated to perform well; EPA remains on-call to assist Galileo in any capacity."



Philadelphia Students Tackle Urban Environmental Issues

To raise awareness of environmental issues among AAPI communities, EPA has supported and encouraged environmental education activities since 1996 at Holy Redeemer School in Philadelphia's Chinatown. The Agency helped the school organize river cleanups and conduct a community campaign against dumping waste in storm drains. Holy Redeemer students also have attended an EPA summer program that teaches environmental lessons to urban youths.

River Cleanup

In 2000, EPA arranged for two classes from the school to participate in Earth Day outdoor educational activities. Twenty-five seventh graders sailed on a commercial-size sailboat, the Jolly 2 Rover, from which the students took water samples from the Delaware River. In addition, 25 eighth graders joined EPA's Operation Clean Below, a river cleanup of Philadelphia's Schuylkill River. While the school transported the students to the sites, EPA volunteers arranged, paid for, and hosted the day's activities.

Chinatown Stenciling Project

EPA sponsored a stenciling project at Holy Redeemer that aimed to reduce waste dumping in storm drains. The graduating class of eighth graders stenciled the words "Dump No Waste—Drains to River" in both English and Chinese on sidewalks adjacent to storm drains in the Chinatown district. "While other kids are misusing spray paint, our students have the opportunity to leave a positive message," said Lisa Canceiliere, principal of Holy Redeemer. A major concern in the community was the dumping of hazardous materials such as paint, motor oil, and pesticides into these storm drains, which lead directly to the Schuylkill and Delaware Rivers. Other sponsors of the project included the Philadelphia Environmental Council and the Philadelphia Water Department.

Summer Environmental Development Program

For the past three years, EPA's summer program for middle school students included four Asian American students from Holy Redeemer. The program is an environmental leadership effort that uses a holistic approach to teach inner-city students about environmental issues prevalent in urban communities. The program's goal is for students to take back what they have learned and impart these lessons to other members of the community, particularly elementary schoolchildren.



Source: EPA Region 3



Protecting Coral Reefs in the Pacific

In the Pacific Islands, coral reef ecosystems are ecologically and economically important to coastal and island inhabitants. Recent grants from EPA's Science to Achieve Results (STAR) Program are providing scientists at the University of Guam and the University of Hawai'i with the opportunity to study the health of coral reef ecosystems in these Pacific Island communities.

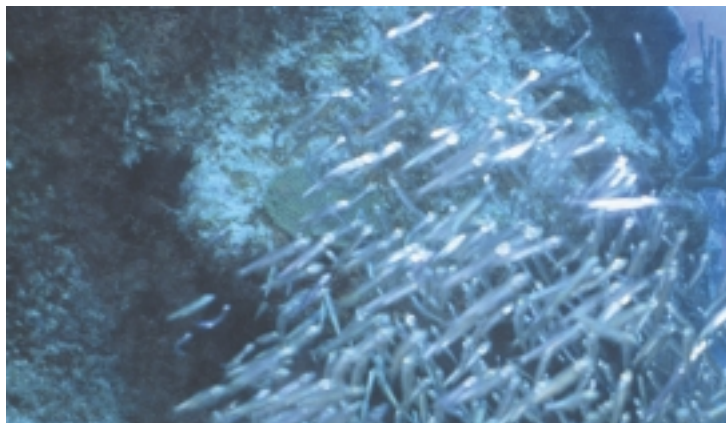
Coral reefs buffer the shore against wave damage and erosion, support a variety of fish and plant species, and provide income from recreational and tourist dollars. These ecosystems also sustain fisheries that supply food and employment to Pacific Islanders.

The new STAR grant, worth nearly \$800,000, will enable the universities to assess pollutants coming from land- and watershed-based activities and study the human influences affecting the health of coral reefs. The research also will examine the societal costs of pollution to Pacific Island communities in terms of water quality and protection of marine resources. The results will provide information to help EPA and Pacific Island communities develop more sustainable watershed management policies.

Dr. Robert Richmond of the University of Guam has received previous grants to study the effects of human-made disturbances on coral

reefs and related marine resources. The STAR grant awarded to Dr. Richmond and Dr. Michael Hamnett, Director of the Social Science Research Institute at the University of Hawai'i at Manoa, along with Dr. Eric Wolanski of the Australian Institute of Marine Science, will build upon results from Dr. Richmond's previous work. The competitively awarded, peer-reviewed grants are administered by EPA's National Center for Environmental Research and Quality Assurance.

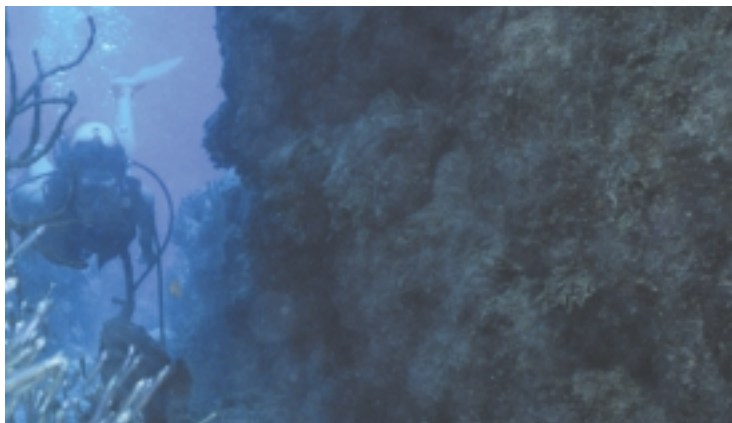
Protection of coral reefs and marine areas, specifically the Northwest Hawai'ian coral reef, are mandated under Executive Orders (EO) 13089, 13158, and 13178. EO 13089, Coral Reef Protection, was signed in June 1998 and directs federal agencies to protect and enhance the conditions of coral reef ecosystems. EO 13158, Marine Protected Areas, was signed in May 2000 and authorizes the creation of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) and dedicates federal agencies to protect resources in the marine environment. EO 13178, Northwestern Hawai'ian Islands Coral Reef Ecosystem Reserve, establishes a reserve in the Northwestern Hawai'ian Islands to preserve the integrity of the coral reef ecosystem. This EO is amended by EO 13196, which finalizes the reserve rules. EPA's grants to the University of Hawai'i and the University of Guam are helping promote the goals of these EOs and develop sustainable policies to foster healthy reef ecosystems in Hawai'i and Guam.



Raising Environmental Awareness in America's Island State

An EPA field office in Hawai'i is helping kindergartners to college kids learn more about local and international environmental issues. The Pacific Islands Contact Office (PICO), in existence since EPA was formed, provides a variety of public affairs services to Hawai'ian residents, including environmental education.

According to Dean Higuchi of PICO, "we play a part in creating an environmental awareness, in fostering environmental education in the schools and colleges, and in educating the general public about EPA's programs and activities."



America's only island state possesses a diverse but fragile natural environment, ranging from sandy beaches to mountain tops. The island is also home to a multitude of plant and wildlife species, including endangered species and species found nowhere else in the world. PICO staff help students learn about local environmental stresses and what they can do to protect the natural resources in their communities.

PICO also helps students learn about national and global issues. PICO staff distribute EPA educational materials on a variety of subjects, from solid waste to clean air. They also visit schools personally to talk about EPA and what can be done to protect the environment. Participating in school environmental projects and fairs is another key activity.

In addition to native Hawai'ians, people from a variety of Asian groups live in the island state. According to 2000 U.S. Census Bureau data, counties in Hawai'i garnered the top four spots in the United States in terms of percentage of Asian Americans in the population. Asian Americans made up 58 to 64 percent of the total population in these counties.



Employment and Professional Advancement

AAPIs remain underrepresented in many professions and job series. EPA is evaluating its diversity profile to determine how to address this issue in its own workplace.

EPA believes that maintaining a diverse workforce is the best way for the Agency to achieve its mission. EPA is committed to hiring and supporting talented and committed professionals who understand the Agency's mission and will work to achieve it.

The Agency has made significant progress in attracting AAPI professionals through a variety of outreach efforts. For example, in recognition of its achievements, EPA received the Federal Asian Pacific American Council's Outstanding Agency of the Year Award in 2000 for nurturing and promoting the AAPI component of its workforce (see page 35).

To continue its progress in developing the AAPI segment of its workforce, EPA has several initiatives under way. For example, the Agency's Senior Environmental Employment (SEE) Program works with the National Asian Pacific Center on Aging, which recruits, screens, hires, and pays workers in EPA Regions 5 and 10. EPA also is strengthening its college recruitment and professional development efforts for AAPIs.

The following articles demonstrate EPA's efforts to nurture the professional development of AAPIs in its workforce.

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College Relations Program With University of Arizona	37
EPA Partners with ECO to Encourage Environmental Careers	37



Asian Pacific American Organization Honors EPA

In 2000, EPA was one of two agencies to receive the Federal Asian Pacific American Council's (FAPAC's) Outstanding Agency of the Year Award. The award recognizes the work of federal agencies to improve representation, promotion, and recognition of Asian Pacific Americans (APA). For many years, FAPAC has given a similar award to recognize individual contributions to the APA community, but this is the first year an award was presented to honor the management achievements of agencies.

Nominations are reviewed by a FAPAC selection committee that picks one or more winners based on their achievements in workforce diversity. EPA was nominated by the Agency's National Asian Pacific American Council, a group of employees representing the APA special emphasis program.

"In large part, EPA won because the selection committee was very impressed with the AAPI program," said Mike Maroof, FAPAC's chair. "Through this program, the Agency has shown continual improvement in its efforts to recruit and advance APAs." Other EPA efforts that impressed the committee included hiring the first

National Special Emphasis Program manager for AAPI employees and conducting an AAPI quality of work-life survey. FAPAC also chose EPA because of an 83 percent increase in the number of APAs holding higher-level positions at the Agency during a 7-year period.



Source: FAPAC

Mike Maroof, FAPAC chair, presents the Outstanding Agency of the Year Award to EPA. Joan Fidler, director of management operations for EPA's Office of International Activities, accepts the award on the Agency's behalf.

In large part, EPA won because the selection committee was very impressed with the AAPI program. Through this program, the Agency has shown continual improvement in its efforts to recruit and advance APAs.

—Mike Maroof,
FAPAC chair

FAPAC at a Glance...

Founded in 1985, FAPAC is an interagency organization of APA employees representing more than 100 federal agencies and the District of Columbia (DC) government. The council promotes equal opportunity and cultural diversity for APAs and pursues their interests and representation in both the federal and DC governments.



Tapping a Valuable Workforce

There's never been a better time for an older adult who's looking for a full- or part-time job. For the past 2 decades, EPA's Senior Environmental Employee (SEE) program has been working to harness the talent, experience, and skills possessed by individuals 55 years and older to help the Agency efficiently respond to emergency situations and short-term projects.

"More than ever, employers are recognizing the value of older workers of all nationalities," according to Clayton Fong, Executive Director of the National Asian Pacific Center on Aging (NAPCA). "We have positions opening up all the time in the senior employment programs—such as SEE—that we administer, and I don't expect that to change."

SEE functions through a series of grants awarded to six national aging organizations, including NAPCA. Through employment programs, multilingual community forums, and health care education, NAPCA has accumulated more than 20 years of experience helping senior citizens remain productive members of their communities.

Under the SEE program, NAPCA recruits, screens, hires, and pays salaries to the workers in EPA Regions 5 and 10. SEE workers are not federal employees, nor are they employees of the grantee organization, rather they are Enrollees in the SEE program.

SEE Enrollee Receives Award

In 1999, Tseh Lin Tsen, one of NAPCA's SEE Enrollees, received the "Claude D. Pepper Distinguished Service Award" during Chicago's 18th Annual Older Workers Awards ceremony. This award is presented annually to distinguished older workers in the Chicago area, and NAPCA was thrilled to have Tsen chosen as one of six finalists.

Tsen started at NAPCA as a participant in another employment program. He later attended classes at Harold Washington College, earning certifications in Accounting and Computer Information systems and subsequently became involved in EPA's SEE program. According to Project Director Mei Lin, who nominated Tsen for the award, he has helped others with computer technology and played an important role in upgrading the computer system at the EPA Safe Water Drinking Branch.

Hundreds of SEE Enrollees currently work in EPA offices nationwide at part- and full-time assignments, depending on their interests and the needs of the EPA office. Assignments range from clerical and secretarial support to highly technical positions such as chemical engineers, public relations specialists, and environmental investigators.

NAPCA's Region 5 Project Director Mei Lin said the program provides workers with benefits aside from employment. "When you work in the environmental field, you become aware of the environmental issues affecting your area, and you bring this knowledge back and share it with your community," Lin said.



College Relations Program With University of Arizona

Attracting skilled workers from diverse backgrounds is a challenge EPA takes very seriously. For a little more than 10 years, EPA has worked with the University of Arizona, an institution at which 1,800 students are AAPIs, to recruit qualified and culturally diverse people into the Agency's workforce.

EPA's Office of Solid Waste and Emergency Response (OSWER) works in partnership with the University of Arizona under the College Relations Program, which includes a summer internship program funded through an EPA cooperative agreement. The EPA/University of Arizona internship program is entering its seventh year; EPA has funded internships for 66 undergraduate and graduate students, of which 14 percent have been AAPIs.

Typically, OSWER's interns work in EPA Headquarters and regional hazardous waste management program offices. The internship program provides students with an opportunity to apply their academic skills and knowledge in a professional environment. Students receive academic credit for participating in the program.

EPA Partners with ECO to Encourage Environmental Careers

Although the number of job opportunities in the environmental field is steadily increasing, the workforce still lacks cultural diversity—and AAPIs are among those underrepresented. To address this issue, EPA has partnered with the Environmental Careers Organization (ECO), a national nonprofit educational organization. ECO recently launched its Diversity Initiative, which matches qualified individuals from minority populations with paid environmental internships. Through this effort, ECO has successfully placed interns at organizations across the country, including EPA.

For example, EPA offered a variety of internships through ECO, including positions entailing research, analysis, economics, data sampling and monitoring, marketing, outreach, budget and financing, and database management.

At EPA, interns work in all branches of the Agency and at regional offices nationwide. EPA hopes the internships will encourage students to pursue environmental careers after graduation.

According to Linda Smith at EPA, one of the advantages of the partnership with ECO is that it allows EPA managers to experience working with people of different backgrounds. "I think this is a great program—it's really made a difference in the diversity of ideas and solutions to environmental issues," Smith said.

EPA and ECO are also working together to support professional training for students pursuing advanced degrees in environmentally related fields. Through this effort, students majoring in technical disciplines at minority academic institutions are eligible to receive full tuition, a stipend, and a 12-week internship at organizations such as EPA.



Translations

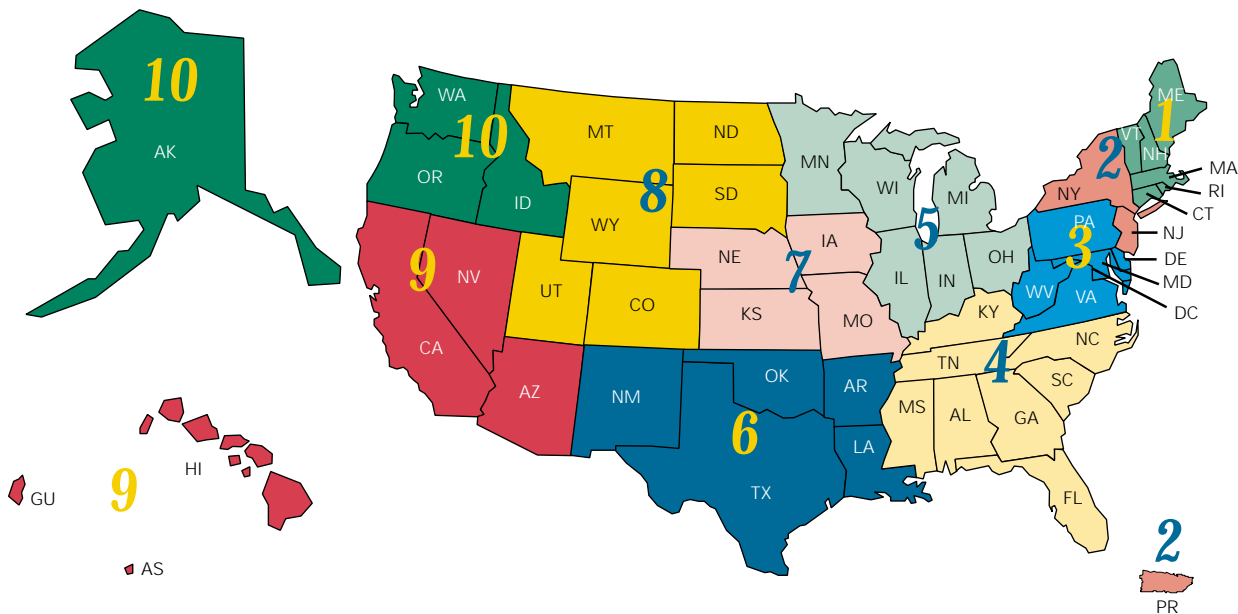
One of EPA's goals is to promote environmental awareness among non-English-speaking populations in the United States. U.S. Census Bureau estimates indicate that of the top 10 ethnic groups in the U.S. that characterize their abilities to speak English as "less than very well," 5 are of Asian/Pacific Islander descent. As an organization committed to serving this nation's citizens, EPA recognizes the need to reach the vast Asian American and Pacific Islander community through documents, correspondence, and outreach materials written in the appropriate AAPI language.

EPA currently lists more than 30 outreach materials that have been translated into numerous AAPI languages. Topics include environmental justice, indoor-air quality, fish consumption, lead contamination in the home, pesticides, and pollution prevention. EPA also encourages more programs to identify informational materials for translation into Asian languages.

For a selection of EPA publications written in AAPI languages, visit the Asian American and Pacific Islander Initiative Web site at <www.epa.gov/aapi>.

EPA Regions


Each EPA Regional Office is responsible within its selected states for carrying out the Agency's programs, incorporating regional needs into decision-making, and implementing federal environmental laws.





EPA United States Environmental Protection Agency

Asian American & Pacific Islander Initiative



Welcome to the Environmental Protection Agency's National Asian American and Pacific Islander Initiative home page.

"[Asian Americans & Pacific Islanders] are a people in constant motion, a great work in progress, each stage more faceted and complex than before. As we overcome adversity and take on new challenges, we have evolved as a people. Our special dynamism is our gift to America. As we transform ourselves, so we are transforming America."

--- Helen Zia
"Asian American Dreams:
The Emergence of an American People"

This Web site is part of EPA's efforts to strengthen its relationships with Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPIs) and better serve the nation's growing AAPI community.

EPA's AAPI Initiative sets forth a comprehensive and detailed approach to promote greater access to economic and employment opportunities with the Agency, increase EPA support for AAPI serving institutions or organizations, facilitate access to environmental information, and improve the delivery of programs and

AAPI Home
About the Asian American & Pacific Islander Initiative

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[Grants & Contract Opportunities](#)

[Educational Opportunities](#)

[Employment Opportunities](#)

Visit the Asian American & Pacific Islander Initiative Web site at
<www.epa.gov/aapi>.



Summary of U.S. EPA

Grant Program	Environmental Justice Small Grants	Solid Waste Management Assistance	Pollution Prevention Incentives for States	Superfund Technical Assistance Grants	Environmental Education
Purpose	To provide financial assistance to eligible community groups and federally recognized tribal governments that are working on or plan to carry out projects that address environmental justice issues.	To promote use of integrated solid waste management systems to solve municipal solid waste generations and management problems at the local, regional, and national levels.	To support state, tribal, and regional programs addressing the reduction or elimination of pollution across all environmental media: air, land, and water.	To enable groups of individuals affected by Superfund National Priorities List (NPL) sites to obtain technical assistance in interpreting site information.	To provide financial support for projects that design, demonstrate, or disseminate environmental education practices, methods, or techniques.
Eligible Applicants	Any affected community group, nonprofit organization, university, or tribal government. Organizations must be incorporated to receive funds.	Nonprofit entities, government agencies, and Indian tribes.	State agencies (including the District of Columbia), state instrumentalities such as universities, federally recognized tribes, and U.S. territories and possessions. States are encouraged to form partnerships with local governments, businesses, and other environmental assistance providers.	Groups affected by an NPL site. All groups must be incorporated as nonprofit organizations.	Local, tribal, or state education agencies, colleges and universities, nonprofit organizations, state environmental agencies, and noncommercial educational broadcasting agencies.
Award Amounts Fiscal Year 2001	Up to \$20,000 each	\$5,000 to \$250,000	\$20,000 to \$200,000 (50% matching grant requirement)	Up to \$50,000	Approximately \$1,000 to \$100,000
Approximate Application Period Fiscal Year 2002	Varies	Varies	October to February	Varies	September to November
Contact Information	Delta Valente, Office of Environmental Justice, 202 564-2594	Linda Kutcher, Office of Solid Waste, 703 308-6114	Christopher Kent, Office of Pollution Prevention and Toxics, 202 260-3480	Lois Gartner, Superfund Community Outreach Center, 703 603-8889	Diane Berger, Office of Environmental Education, 202 260-8619



Community Grant Programs

Brownfields Job Training and Development Demonstration Pilots	Brownfields Assessment Demonstration Pilots	Environmental Protection: Consolidated Research	National Estuary Program	Children's Health Protection
To facilitate cleanup of brownfields sites contaminated with hazardous substances and prepare trainees for future employment in the environmental field. The pilot projects must prepare trainees in activities that can be usefully applied to a cleanup employing an alternative or innovative technology.	To empower States, communities, tribes, and other stakeholders in economic redevelopment to work together in a timely manner to prevent, assess, and safely clean up brownfields to promote their sustainable reuse. EPA's Brownfields Assessment Demonstration Pilots "are directed toward environmental activities preliminary to cleanup, such as site assessments, site identification, site characterization, and site response or cleanup planning	To support environmental research based on excellent science as determined through peer review by experts drawn from the nationally scientific community.	To promote the development of comprehensive conservation and management plans for designated estuaries.	To support community-based and regional projects that enhance public outreach and communication; to assist families in evaluating risks to children and in making informed consumer choices.
Colleges, universities, nonprofits, training centers, community-based job training centers, states, cities, towns, counties, U.S. territories, and federally recognized Indian tribes. Generally, entities with experience in providing job training and placement programs are invited to apply.	States and US territories, political subdivisions (including cities, towns, and counties) and federally recognized Indian tribes.	States, local governments, federally recognized Indian tribes, territories and possessions, public and private universities and colleges, hospitals, laboratories, public and private nonprofit institutions, and highly qualified individuals.	Grants are issued only for those estuaries designated as "nationally significant" by EPA. EPA is authorized to make grants to State, interstate, and regional water pollution control agencies and entities, State coastal zone management agencies, interstate agencies, other public and nonprofit private agencies, institutions, organizations, and individuals (Section 320(g)(l)). Profit making organizations are not eligible for grants.	Community groups, public nonprofit organizations, tribal governments, and municipal/local governments.
Up to \$200,000 over 2 years	Up to \$200,000 for 2 years	\$6,000 to \$1,500,000	\$10,000 to \$795,000	\$35,000 to \$135,000
Varies	Varies	Varies per specific research program	November to May	Varies
Myra Blakely, Office of Solid Waste and Emergency Response, 202 260-4527	Becky Brooks, Office of Solid Waste and Emergency Response, 202 260-8474	National Center for Environmental Research, 800 490-9194	Darrell Brown, Office of Wetlands, Oceans, and Watersheds Protection, 202 260-6502	Ramona Trovato, Office of Children's Health, 202 260-7778





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